

Family and Community Circle



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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



AchieveNJ: Evaluation and Support

Families will be delighted to know that the AchieveNJ website has been enhanced and designed to be more family-friendly.

AchieveNJ is the new educator evaluation system that all schools are implementing this year as part of the tenure reform bill signed by Governor Christie in 2012. With input from the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee and educators across the state, the New Jersey Department of Education has recently updated the entire AchieveNJ website. The streamlined site, accessed at <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/>, is designed to make key resources and answers to frequently asked questions easier to find.

We need your input. If you like the new site or have ideas for ways to make it even better, please email educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us. The Office of Evaluation also continues to support school districts and educators with the first year of implementation of AchieveNJ through regular memos and updated guidance. Please visit <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/> for a list of resources.



LOAN Forgiveness and Cancellation

The New Jersey Department of Education has developed this Loan Forgiveness and Cancellation Summary to help every eligible New Jersey educator reap the benefits of the national loan forgiveness program. You can also access this Teacher Cancellation Low Income Directory Web site for Federal Student Aid and this Federal Stafford Loan Forgiveness page for more information.

If you don't qualify for forgiveness or cancellation, view this information about Public Service Loan Forgiveness. A program was created in 2007 and is for individuals who are working full time in public service jobs. After you have made 120 payments, the remaining balance of your loan principle will be cancelled. The first cancellations will not be granted until October 2017. Please view our FAQ on this topic or email loans@doe.state.nj.us if you need further assistance.

It's that Time Again: End of Year Testing



Created by: Dr. Felecia Nace, Education Specialist, New Jersey Department of Education

Whether your child will be participating in the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) or the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), testing can either be a stressful experience or a pleasant one for children. Much of how a child copes with testing depends on his/her comfort level. Parents can play a major role in relieving a child's stress. The most important role parents can play is to make sure that children are prepared to meet the challenges of the test. Parents should talk to their child's teachers to find out what they can do at home to best prepare children for specific types of questions and problems that children might encounter on a particular test. Ask teachers to share some sample test questions with you. It would be helpful if parents conducted timed tests at home with the teacher's guidance, of course.

Many of us can remember being tested in elementary school, middle school, and high school and we can recall how much pressure we felt when the clock started at the beginning of each testing section. For many of us, that time went by all too quickly and left some of us feeling uneasy about the outcome. Although, students have been preparing for the standardized tests for weeks now, a little assistance from parents will go a long way. When parents help their children prepare for tests, children are reminded that family members are their biggest fans and support system. Here are some additional tips that can help make testing a comfortable experience for your child:

Find out from your child's school which subjects will be tested. Then, review vocabulary and topics for those subjects along with your child. Try to make the time you

spend reviewing topics and vocabulary with your child relaxed and fun. For example, when reviewing vocabulary, you may include other siblings and create a family game. When possible, let your children decide/create the game.

Timed testing is also an extremely important part of preparation. Again, work closely with the school and ask for sample test preparation questions that you can review with your child. Any timed practice materials that the school can share with you would be great.

Make sure your child gets to bed early the night before the test. We all know that a good night sleep is a great way to start any day.

On the day of the test, make sure your child wears comfortable clothing, has a nutritious breakfast, and, before your child leaves for school, tell him/her that you have confidence that he/she will do well on the test. Saying this with a smile will help put children at ease as they head out the door, whether they are 5 years of age or 17.

For information about state testing, please visit the following webpage: www.measinc.com/nj



Useful Resources from the Title I Office

Compiled by: *Lori Ramella, Education Specialist, Office of Title I—Bilingual Component*

http://www.state.nj.us/education/bilingual/esl/resource_guide_adult_english.pdf



The objective of this directory is to help immigrants to the United States find English as a second language (ESL) programs in their area that are best suited to their needs. Originally created as a collaborative project between the New Jersey Departments of Community Affairs and Education (NJDOE), it is annually revised by the NJDOE. The resources in the directory are current as of June 2013; however, programs are constantly changing. The listings are grouped alphabetically by county. The directory also contains a listing of Internet ESL resources (page 40), resources for businesses that wish to provide their employees with ESL training (page 38), and an index of the listings.

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/bilingual/resources/ParentHandbook.pdf>

Every parent wants their child to succeed in school, and parents can play an important role in helping their children succeed. Children are often more successful when their parents or guardians get involved, help them with homework, and encourage them to do their best work. You can help your child succeed by letting them know that you are interested by asking questions of your child, their teachers, and their school.

This guide is designed to answer some of your questions and to give you important information about the United States and New Jersey school systems. If your family is new to New Jersey or the United States, you may find useful general information in this guide to help you get accustomed to New Jersey schools. For more specific questions, please call your child's school. Our hope is that this guide will help you and your child make the most of their educational experiences.



<http://www.state.nj.us/education/bilingual/resources/websites/parents.htm>

The websites contained in this link provide helpful hints for parents of bilingual students, as well as book resources and ways in which parents can help their children at home..



Spring Recruitment Fairs for Educators at New Jersey Institutes of Higher Education

Submitted by: The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce

Do you know someone who is qualified and seeking a job in the field of education? Each year, New Jersey school districts seek to recruit and select great educators. The Department has recently posted a chart listing spring 2014 recruitment fairs as a resource to district staff looking to select talented educators as well as those interested in teaching in a New Jersey school.

(<http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/rpr/recruitment/resources/Spring2014IHERecruitmentFairs.pdf>). This list is for informational purposes only and does not reflect an endorsement from the New Jersey Department of Education. For additional details and for the most up-to-date information about the event, please contact the host organization directly.

*Compiled by Cynthia Bucchi,
Office of Strategic Communications & Partnerships*

The Office of Strategic Communications and Partnerships is responsible for responding to questions from families and community members who write to "Ask DOE" and choose the topic "Other." We have compiled some of the recent frequently asked questions received from across the state. If you are interested in writing to "Ask DOE" please visit our web page at the following address:

<https://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/contact.htm>.

Question: When a school district closes due to a natural disaster or other emergencies, what are the policies for school make-up days?

Answer: Each school district board of education establishes a district-specific policy regarding make-up days for missed school days due to natural disasters or other emergencies. The law requires school districts to be in session for 180 days of instruction to receive their full allocation of school aid. For more information, please review State Statute N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9 at the following web address: <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>.

Question: When the Governor declares a State of Emergency in New Jersey, does it mean that all school districts must close?

Answer: When the Governor declares a state of emergency, he is not mandating that school districts close. Often times, it is a local school district decision whether or not to close its schools. Information on "states of emergency" may be found on the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management website at: http://www.nj.gov/njoem/soe_faq.html#1.

